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January 11, 2002

Attorney General John Ashcroft  
U.S. Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Mr. Ashcroft,

I am glad that this Microsoft lawsuit has been settled. Aside from the obvious problems that the lawsuit had to begin with, it is certainly an unwanted distraction now that more important events in our nation have virtually eclipsed the lawsuit's importance. Besides, it's a fair settlement in its own right, yielding concessions to both hardware and software companies, including disclosure to both groups of interfaces and protocols within Windows.

The settlement makes it so that Windows can be altered to suit hardware companies more effectively if they want to sell non-Microsoft software with the Windows operating system preinstalled. This will be especially possible now, because Microsoft must redesign Windows to make it more accommodating to non-Microsoft applications, particularly sophisticated multi-media applications like RealAudio or QuickTime.

Our national efforts should now be invested in issues like rebuilding our economy, creating jobs and strengthening our national security. We should not spend any more time continuing our self-inflicted damage to our country's business community by proceeding with any further action against one of our country's most successful businesses like Microsoft.

I am hoping that this settlement will stand, and we can move on to more important priorities.

Sincerely,

*Rita A. Bane*

Rita Bane

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